

CLAIMS:

1. A method of generating identification information relating to a component of a computer network having an associated memory storing a first set of data items relating to the component, comprising retrieving one or more of said first set of data items from said associated memory and generating said identifying information from said retrieved data items.

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2. A method according to claim 1 wherein said identification information is generated in a first network component in response to a request from a network management application program running in a second network component.

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3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the method further comprises retrieving further data from a further memory associated with said first network component or with another network component, and adding said further data as a suffix or prefix to said retrieved data to generate said identifying information.

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4. A method according to claim 2 wherein said generated identification information is sent from said first network component to said second network component.

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5. A method according to claim 1 wherein said associated

memory is an ID PROM, and said first set of data items includes at least one of a manufacturer's part number, a serial number, and an equipment type descriptor.

5 6. A computer network component comprising a processor and a memory wherein the memory stores machine-implementable instructions executable by the processor to carry out the method of claim 1.

10 7. A method of operating a computer network including a first network component and a second network component linked to the first network component by a communication network, the second network component being operable to perform a network management application wherein a request for identification information is sent via the communications network to the first network component, and wherein the first network component provides identification information in response to such a request by retrieving one or more data items from a first set of data items stored in a memory associated with said first network component, generating said identification information from said retrieved data items, and sending said generated identification information to said second network component via said communications network.

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8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the step of generating said identification information comprises adding

said retrieved data item or items as a suffix or prefix to data items stored in a further memory of said first network component.

5. 9. A method according to claim 7, wherein said first network component is a sub-system of a third network component, and the step of generating said identification information comprises adding said retrieved data item or items as a suffix or prefix to data items stored in a memory
10 of said third network component.

10. A method according to claim 7, wherein said first set of data items comprises at least one of a manufacturer's part number, a type descriptor, and a serial number.

15. 11. A method according to claim 7, wherein said memory associated with said first network component comprises an ID PROM.

20. 12. A method according to claim 7, wherein identification information received by the second network component is compared with management information data stored in a memory in said second network component.

25. 13. A data carrier carrying machine-implementable instructions for carrying out the method of claim 7.

14. A method of generating a management information data file for use in the method of claim 13, comprising extracting from a database of product information data corresponding to a description of an item of equipment and data corresponding to said first data items relating to said equipment, generating identifying information from said first data items, and storing a correlation between said generated identifying information and said data corresponding to said description.

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15. A data carrier carrying machine-implementable instructions for carrying out the method of claim 14.